



TASK FORCE LIBERTY

Press Release

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FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, TIKRIT, Iraq. Soldiers in Task Force Liberty continue to make a difference in Iraq. Across a spectrum of operations, Task Force Liberty partners with Iraqi Security Forces in Kirkuk, As Sulayminayah, Diyala and Salah Ad Din Provinces to build capable and sustainable Iraqi Police and Army forces.

The support provided to Iraqi Police and Army forces continues to provide results across North Central Iraq. The people of Iraq every day see the growing capabilities of their own security forces. The success of the Iraqi Police and Army forces gains irreversible momentum for the future security and prosperity of North Central Iraq.

Breaking the Cycle of Violence

In the last two weeks, operations in the Task Force Liberty area resulted in an estimated 504 Anti-Iraqi forces detained, 29 killed and three wounded. Significant ammunition seized includes 77 rockets, 2,142 mortar, and artillery rounds, 158 hand grenades, 1,780 rounds of ammunition and more than 400 pounds of explosives. Major equipment captured included four machine guns, one anti-aircraft machine gun, 411 anti-personnel mines, 84 anti-tank mines, 146 small arms, 73 rocket propelled grenade (RPG) launchers with 163 rounds, 35 RPG propellants, and four ballistic vests.

Within the Division's area of responsibility, 48 improvised explosive devices were discovered prior to detonation, preventing the needless loss of life at the hands of Anti-Iraqi forces.

Iraqi Forces continue towards independent actions against insurgents

Soldiers in the Iraqi army's 3rd Brigade of the 5th Division conducted an independent operation to uncover suspected weapons caches near Balad Ruz in Diyala Province.



The cordon and search mission quickly became a direct combat action when the Iraqi army soldiers found more than two dozen insurgents at one of the suspected sites.

The terrorists fought from prepared positions and Soldiers from the 278th Regimental Combat Team joined the ensuing firefight to trap the insurgents.

The action lasted into the evening and Iraqi army soldiers received both Army Aviation and Air Force supporting fires. Soldiers at the site estimate up to 17 terrorists were killed at the remote site, with early indications from the Iraqi soldiers that some of the insurgents killed were foreign fighters.

1st Brigade Combat Team (Raider). Soldiers in the 1st Brigade Combat Team, from the Army's 3rd Infantry Division at Fort Stewart, Georgia, continue to expand their partnership with Iraqi Security Forces, bringing security to the people of North Central Iraq.

Members of several provincial agencies gathered at the Salah Ad Din governate building in Tikrit on March 31st to discuss security issues. This was the second of what is to be monthly Provincial Security Council meetings. Issues discussed included the Tikrit Provincial Police, the 30th Iraqi army brigade, the Provincial Joint Coordination Center and updates from Samarra and Sharqat. The weekly Security Council working group will direct the various security agencies to coordinate efforts and work towards a legitimate and effective provincial government.

In Ad Duluiyah, City Council members participated in delivering medical supplies to the city's main medical clinic on April 2nd. The clinic's senior physician coordinated with the city council for delivery of the supplies. Task Force 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment Soldiers and medics also helped patients and assisted in the distribution of supplies.

Other partnerships between Raiders Soldiers and local citizens resulted in the Tikrit Child Care Organization grand opening of its Children's Cinema Center on April 3rd. The Tikrit Child Care Organization assists handicapped children from the region and the new cinema allows the children to enjoy movies and provides another teaching tool for the teachers.



Since the end of the war, the Ministry of Education has worked tirelessly to open schools and other centers of learning. As the Iraqi Government continues to rebuild, education and child care systems are being created.

In a show of determination for improved security, the Iraqi National Police (INP) held a graduation for 250 new officers in Tikrit on April 3rd. The graduates put on a demonstration, which included a simulated vehicle search, during the ceremony.

As part of the continuing efforts to kill or capture terrorists in the area, an Iraqi army company raided a suspected insurgent safe house in Bayji on April 3rd and uncovered a weapons cache.

Company C, 201st Iraqi army battalion conducted the independent raid in the Al Askari neighborhood of Bayji based on locally developed sources of intelligence.

During the raid a cache consisting of mortar and artillery rounds, machine gun ammunition, improvised explosive device making material, rocket propelled grenades, rifles and explosives were found. The operation resulted in no losses or injuries to the Iraqi army soldiers.

3rd Brigade Combat Team (Sledgehammer). The battalion task forces in the “Sledgehammer” Brigade Combat Team from Fort Benning, Georgia continue their work to bring peace and stability to Diyala Province.

Task Force 66, nicknamed the Desert Lions, stood up it’s headquarters and began to conduct the critical mission of training the Iraqi army’s 32nd Brigade staff officers. Headed by Lt. Col. Daniel Kessler, TF66 administered a week of intensive staff training that culminated in a Brigade Staff Tactical Operations Center Exercise (TOCEX). “The 32nd Iraqi Army Brigade is progressing nicely,” stated Kessler. On March 29, the 32nd Brigade conducted it’s first brigade-level raid. During the raid, elements of the 205th, 204th and 213th Iraqi army battalions conducted a cordon and search in downtown Baqubah. The mission resulted in the capture of over one dozen suspected insurgents and the seizure of weapons, ammunition and bomb making material.

Task Force Liberty Soldiers assigned to Forward Operating Base Warhorse received a great morale boost when, on April 2, the much anticipated grand opening of the Green Bean Coffee Shop took place. The Green Bean is a café style coffee shop that serves



hot and cold drinks in a relaxed, western style atmosphere and offers Task Force Liberty Soldiers a 'taste of home.'

Soldiers of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team received official recognition April 9 for their honorable duty and hard work in a combat theater when Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto awarded them their Combat Patch. In a ceremony marked by history and ritual, Maj. Gen. Taluto praised the 3rd Brigade Combat Team saying that the Soldiers "are among the most dedicated of Americans." The distinctive 'Rainbow' patch represents the honorable and valorous history of the 42nd Infantry Division and wearing it represents pride in the unit and pride in dedicated service, Taluto said. The Division Commander also awarded Purple Heart Medals to seven Soldiers wounded in action.

116th Brigade Combat Team (Warrior). The Idaho Army National Guard's 116th Brigade Combat Team's mission in North Central Iraq continues to be focused in the areas of security, economic development, governance and communication.

This period also included the historic April 8 ceremony where the 116th BCT's "snake patch" was officially declared a combat patch, authorized for wear on the right sleeve of all who have served under the 116th BCT in the combat zone. The ceremony represents another significant milestone in the 116th BCT's service in the Global War On Terrorism.

The last two weeks have seen ongoing progress in the training and effectiveness of Iraqi security forces in the provinces of Kirkuk and As Sulaymaniyah. The 116th BCT's Task Force 1-148 Field Artillery continues training and certifying soldiers of the 215th Iraqi army battalion on squad-level tasks and basic soldier skills. The artillery Soldiers also aided the Iraqi army's 33rd Brigade in dedicating a new recruiting center, training medics and acquiring new equipment.

Task Force 1-163 Infantry has been working daily with Iraqi Security Forces and local officials to improve the security situation in their area of western Kirkuk Province. Recent operations detained insurgents suspected of attacks on coalition forces.

Task Force 2-116 Armor oversaw training of the 208th Iraqi army battalion staff and conducting squad-level training with their Iraqi army partners. The task force conducted joint raids with Iraqi forces netting numerous terrorist suspects. The unit has also observed several instances of local citizens leading them to explosive ordinance.



Task Force 3-116 Armor conducted training with Iraqi army soldiers on preparing fighting positions and patrolling tactics. All units are seeing the returns on our Soldier investment in training, facilities and equipment as Iraqi security forces are spearheading missions and even autonomously accomplishing many operations.

Economic development continues to be seen in the heightened pace of construction and improvement projects. An agreement between USAID, Kirkuk's Governor Mustafa, and the 116th BCT's economic team was signed April 7 for the creation of a regional landfill that will serve the Kirkuk Province. Getting the garbage off the streets has been a high priority for both Governor Mustafa and 116th BCT Commander Brig. Gen. Alan Gayhart. Other economic milestones include the completion of ten school renovation projects, progress on medical clinic construction, completion of new fire and police stations and the delivery of a new electrical generator for the region.

Several 116th BCT units, including the 145th Support Battalion, 116th Engineer Battalion and several task forces were instrumental in providing logistical and security support for the movement and installation of the large generator-- dubbed the "Mother of all generators (MOAG)" by coalition leaders-- to a community south of Kirkuk.

The seating of Jalal Talibani as the transitional prime minister of Iraq at the federal level on April 6 is symbolic of the political progress being made in all areas of the country. The 116th BCT's leadership continues to support the local provincial councils of Kirkuk and As Sulaymaniyah as they make progress in adopting their own democratic form of government. The 116th BCT's leadership continues to meet with political, religious and tribal leaders as they discuss issues affecting their people.

Communicating important information to the local populace and key leaders was ongoing over the past two weeks. The 116th BCT's leadership facilitated a meeting between Kirkuk Provincial Council members and several visiting U.S. Representatives. The meeting was covered by local press. The Council also participated in a press conference facilitated by the 116th BCT. The Council also was informed of coalition forces operations when Brig. Gen. Gayhart addressed them at one of their meetings.



278th Regimental Combat Team (The Volunteers). The 278th Regimental Combat Team from the Tennessee Army National Guard continues to train and mentor the Iraqi Security Forces in their partnership to achieve a secure and prosperous Iraq.

Demonstrating the importance of education, Soldiers of 3rd Squadron, 278th provided the library in Jalula, Iraq with several boxes of books that were provided by the U.S. Department of State. The books covered a variety of topics on the democratic and comparative political processes. These topics now fill the shelves along side several books on the Islamic faith, which the library already had. The Jalula Library was renovated last year and the new books increase the ability of the library to provide services to the local populace. This is another visible project that shows the local government providing for the needs of the Iraqi people.

A key component of the Iraqi Security Force's training program is conducting joint patrols with 278th Soldiers. On March 27, Soldiers of 2nd Squadron, 278th conducted a joint dismounted patrol through the market area in Tuz with the Iraqi Police. This patrol was highly visible by design to show the people of Tuz that the Coalition Forces are working closely with the Iraqi Police enhancing their security. This patrol was well received by the local people and merchants. The Mayor of Tuz reports many accounts of positive feedback and requested similar patrols in the future.

The 278th also continues to emphasize the importance of Iraq's future. On March 28, Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 278th helped open a new primary school in the village of Al Aklaqas for over 100 students. Various local leaders were present with the school headmaster and the commander of Company D, 2nd Squadron, 278th for the opening. Support Squadron Soldiers then provided donated school supplies to the students.

On April 4, after receiving information from multiple sources, Company H, 2nd Squadron, 278th raided the home of a suspected insurgent in Tuz. Material found during the raid included a new mortar round and approximately 300 small clocks similar to those used in previous IED attacks in the area. Four detainees were held. Three of the detainees had arrest warrants and were turned over to the Iraqi Police and the remaining detainee is in the custody of the 209th Iraqi army battalion. This mission removed a threat to the local populace and increased security in the area.



42nd Aviation Brigade (Eagle). Task Force Eagle continues to soar as part of Task Force Liberty and continues to improve its operational posture in support of the ground units throughout the 42nd Infantry Division's area.

In addition to routine reconnaissance, battlefield circulation and escort missions, the past two weeks for the Aviation Brigade included support to ground unit commanders with a number of operations in the Tigris River Valley and in remote portions of Salah Ad Din and Diyala Provinces.

The big mission for aircrews for the past two weeks has been the protection of the V94 generator, otherwise known as the Mother of All Generators or "MOAG." Task Force Liberty's 8th Battalion, 229th Attack Helicopter Regiment provided aerial security during its movement.

Aeroscouts of the 1st Squadron, 17th Cavalry continue serving as the eyes of the division, providing reconnaissance throughout AO Liberty. Flying primarily in support of 1st and 3rd Brigade Combat Teams, the Air Cavalry Troops continue covering the Tigris River Valley, ready to strike at insurgent forces throughout the area.

Going well beyond the important mission of battlefield circulation, both lift battalions have transported Task Force Liberty and Iraqi army troops in swift assaults against suspected insurgent positions.

Soldiers of the 642nd Division Aviation Support Battalion continue to work around the clock to maintain the brigade's aircraft, ensuring the safety and reliability of the brigade's assets.

Division Artillery (Thunder). Task Force 3-13th Field Artillery continue their hard work to provide force protection at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Summerall. Soldiers in the Base Reactionary Force are quickly gaining experience to improve the Divarty Soldiers quick and accurate response to terrorist attacks on any coalition base. New tactics and techniques for Divarty response to indirect fire attacks are exercised daily.

A new addition to our inventory is the Army's RAVEN unmanned aircraft for area reconnaissance. Soldiers fly the aircraft daily to help improve base security. The new vehicle provides better information and reconnaissance for the FOB.



FOB Summerall welcomed five Medal of Honor recipients on April 10. The distinguished visitors included a representative from each military service who holds our nation's highest military honor. One of the recipients, Col. (retired) Jack J. Jacobs, visited with the 42nd Divarty Soldiers during mobilization training at Fort Drum and gave a spirited talk to Soldiers before deployment. The Medal of Honor recipients attended a Soldier reenlistment ceremony on FOB Summerall, visited various sites and spoke with the Divarty Soldiers about their experiences.

Division Engineers (Detonator). 42nd Division Engineers played an integral role to ensure the delivery of the "Mother Of All Generators," (MOAG), to the power generation plant at Taza, Iraq. Elements of Task Force Trailblazer, the 467th Engineer Battalion, linked up with the MAOG convoy of 20 vehicles and traveled ahead of the convoy to reduce the probability of encountering IEDs. 983rd Engineer Battalion Soldiers, using heavy equipment, ensured movement along the route by removing and replacing berms and barriers at check points and bases as the MOAG passed.

Division Support Command (Muleskinner). Division Support Command (DISCOM) continues to improve the combat logistical support provided to the 42nd Infantry Division and Task Force Liberty. Over the past two weeks, DISCOM Soldiers conducted more than 235 Combat Logistical Patrols in support of the division by the 50th Main Support Battalion (MSB) and supporting Corps Support Command units.

The 42nd DISCOM works closely with corps logisticians to continue moving supply and repair parts, keeping critical equipment items maintained and operational. During this last reporting period, five logistics flights flew ammunition and other critical items forward from storage sites to combat units in the field. The support operations section remains extremely busy coordinating these functions with the movement control officer.

When items cannot be moved by air, Soldiers in the DISCOM conduct combat logistics patrols to move supplies forward to our Soldiers. Whether moving ammunition, fuel, security barriers, repair parts or Soldiers' mail, the 42nd DISCOM plays a critical role in managing the flow and DISCOM Soldiers are the key part of moving these items forward to the troops.



As combat operations continue, Forward Operating Base Speicher in Tikrit remains a busy place. Ammunition for the Brigade Combat Teams is issued on a daily basis. The division ammunition officer and the material management officer hosted an ammunition summit on April 5 to improve the request, planning, movement and issuance of ammunition for the thousands of Soldiers of Task Force Liberty.

The division medical operations center (DMOC) chaired a medical synchronization meeting with members of the division and corps medical units on a variety of medical issues, including combat stress. As part of their support for the Soldier, the optical sections of Company E, 50th MSB sent a team to FOB Summerall to conduct Soldier eye exams and issue prescription glasses.

Developing the Iraqi army remains a priority to the DISCOM and Task Force Liberty. Over 40 Toyota Land Cruisers were delivered to the Iraqi army. Weapons, ammunition and other equipment have been delivered to the brigade's throughout the area of operation. Over 90 computers, fax machines and printers were delivered to Iraqi forces to help them in the administration of their units.

The 42nd DISCOM motto is "First in Support" and the motto for the 50th Main Support Battalion is "The Best Don't Rest." As part of Task Force Liberty, DISCOM Soldiers are holding to our mottos.

Conclusion

Task Force Liberty and our Iraqi Security Force partners continue to help provide a safe and secure Iraq. We continue to work with the Iraqi Security Forces to neutralize the insurgency. We continue to train, coach and support the Iraqi Security Forces as they develop their own independent capabilities to defeat the insurgency and improve the quality of life for the Iraqi people. We believe in the future of Iraq. To our families, friends, employers and the American people, Task Force Liberty thanks you for your steadfast support and encouragement.

Never Forget!

For more information on the 42nd Infantry Division and Task Force Liberty:

www.42id.army.mil
